UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/817,203	03/27/2001	Masumi Yoshino	205114US2	7892

22850 7590 02/15/2007	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.	BLAIR, DOUGLAS B	
1940 DUKE STREET		
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314	ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
	2142	

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	02/15/2007	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Notice of this Office communication was sent electronically on the above-indicated "Notification Date" and has a shortened statutory period for reply of 3 MONTHS from 02/15/2007.

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patentdocket@oblon.com
oblonpat@oblon.com
jgardner@oblon.com

PTOL-90A (Rev. 10/06)

	Application No.	**Applicant(s)**
Office Action Summary	09/817,203	YOSHINO ET AL.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	Douglas B. Blair	2142

-- *The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address* --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
  Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>22 January 2007</u>.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**.   2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-5,9-26 and 30-38* is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-5, 9-26, and 30-38* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All   b)☐ Some *   c)☐ None of:

        1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

        2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

        3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1.   A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in

37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is

eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e)

has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to

37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 1/22/2007 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

2.   Claims 1-5, 9-26, and 30-38 are currently pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

4.   Claims 1-5, 9-24, and 30-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable

over U.S. Patent Number 6,477,531 to Sullivan et al..

5.   As to claim 1, Sullivan teaches an online support method that gives online support to

eliminate a problem arising in a device, said online support method comprising the steps of: (a)

providing a user of the device with a specific form that enables the user to input and transmit

information with regard to the problem (col. 7, line 59-col. 8, line 4, see also Figure 6 for

specific form and Figure 4 for flow chart); (b) providing the user of the device with support

information, which is prepared in advance for elimination of the problem, wherein the specific

form comprises a first part that asks the user to input first information generally required for

analysis of the problem (Figure 6 and step 66 of Figure 4), and a second part that enables the user

to input arbitrary information (Figure 6 and step 68 of Figure 4); (c) obtaining browsing record

information, which represents a user's browsing record of the support information, in addition to

information input into the specific form (col. 12, lines 8-18); and (d) transmitting the information

input into the specific forms and the browsing record information attached to the specific form

and the to an online support operator (Figure 12); however Sullivan does not explicitly teach the

provision of the support information before providing the form as part of Sullivan's main

embodiment.

Sullivan does teach a system in which support information can be provided before any

form is filled out (col. 1, lines 54-61).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention

to combine the teachings of Sullivan's main embodiment for providing online help with the

teachings of Sullivan regarding online support information before any form is input because an

FAQ or support notes could solve a user's problems with minimal effort by the user (col. 1, lines

54-61).

6.   As to claim 2, Sullivan the online support method of claim 1, wherein said step (b)

provides the support information in response to each selecting instruction given by the user (col.

8, lines 5-47).

7.   As to claim 3, Sullivan teaches the online support method of claim 1, wherein the specific

form also asks the user to input information regarding the user (Figure 6, information about the

user's problem is information regarding the user).

8.   As to claim 4, Sullivan teaches the online support method of claim 1, wherein the specific

form also asks the user to input information regarding an operation carried out by the user to

eliminate the problem (col. 8, lines 5-64).

9.   As to claim 5, Sullivan teaches the online support method of claim 1, wherein the specific

form asks the user to input information regarding a user's browsing record of the support

information provided in advance (col. 8, lines 48-63, it can only be assumed that by "asking" the

applicant means automatically collecting because that is the only scenario described in the

applicant's specification at paragraph 16).

10.   As to claim 9, Sullivan teaches the online support method of claim 1, wherein the first

information required to identify the device includes at least one of a model name of the device,

an ID number allocated to the individual device, information that identifies a driver program for

driving the device, and information that identifies an operating system on which the driver

programs runs (Figures 5-6).

11.   As to claim 10, Sullivan teaches the online support method of claim 1, wherein the

second information required to specify the working status of the device includes at least one of

information that identifies an application program activated on the device when the problem

arises, information that identifies an application program used for driving the device and

specifies data transmitted to the device, and information that specifies a communication

environment of the device (Figures 5-6).

12.   As to claim 11, Sullivan teaches the online support method of claim 1, wherein the device

comprises a storage unit configured to store specific information representing the working status

of the device, and the second information required to specify the working status of the device

comprises information that allows access to the storage unit (Figure 5-6).

13.   As to claims 12-14, 16-23, and 30-35, they feature limitations from claims 1-4 and 6 and

are rejected for the same reasons as claims 1-6.

14.   As to claim 15, Sullivan teaches the online support method of claim 1, wherein said step

(a) enables the specific form to be offered to the user without said step (b), in response to an

instruction given by the user (Figures 5-6).

15.   Claim 1-5, 9-24, and 30-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable

over U.S. Patent Number 6,691,159 to Grewal et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,477,531 to

Sullivan et al.

16.   As to claim 1, Grewal teaches an online support method that gives online support to

eliminate a problem arising in a device, said online support method comprising the steps of:

providing a user of the device with a specific form that enables the user to input and transmit

information with regard to the problem (col. 3, lines 32-45); and providing the user of the device

with support information, which is prepared in advance for elimination of the problem, prior to

the transmission (col. 3, lines 32-45); wherein the form comprises a part for the that asks the user

to input first information required to identify the device and a part for second information

required to specify the working status of the device and a part for enabling the user to input

arbitrary information with regard to the problem (A user can select a device in Figure 4 and then

specify working status and arbitrary information in the chat form of Figure 5); and obtaining

browsing record information, which represents a user's browsing record of the support

information, in addition to the information input into the specific form (Figure 4, the "Usual

Destinations" box in the top right of the browser is a user browsing record.); however Grewal

does not explicitly teach the one specific form that allows a user to input device identity,

working status and arbitrary information and Grewal does not explicitly teach the transmission of

a browsing record attached with the information input into the form.

Sullivan teaches one specific form that allows a user to input device identity, working

status and arbitrary information and the transmission of a browsing record attached with the

information input into the form (See mapping in rejection presented previously in this action).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the Computer Networking art at the

time of the invention to combine the teachings of Grewal regarding the provision of online

support information with a form with the teachings of Sullivan regarding a more specific online

form because Sullivan's form allows an online help provider to have more specific information

about a problem.

17.   As to claim 2, Grewal teaches an online support method in accordance with claim 1,

wherein the support information is provided in response to each selecting instruction given by

the user (col. 3, lines 32-45).

18.   As to claim 3, Grewal teaches an online support method in accordance with claim 1,

wherein the specific form also asks the user to input information regarding the individual user

(col. 3, lines 15-26).

19.   As to claim 4, Grewal teaches an online support method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the specific form also asks the user to input information regarding an operation carried out by the user to eliminate the problem (Figure 6).

20.   As to claim 5, Grewal teaches an online support method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the specific form asks the user to input information regarding a user's browsing record of the support information provided in advance (Figure 4).

21.   As to claim 9, Grewal teaches an online support method in accordance with claim 8, wherein the first information required to identify the device includes a model name of the device (Figure 4).

22.   As to claim 10, Grewal teaches an online support method in accordance with claim 8, wherein the second information required to specify the working status of the device identifies an application program activated on the device when the problem arises (Figure 6).

23.   As to claim 11, Grewal teaches an online support method in accordance with claim 8, wherein the device comprises a storage unit in which information representing the working status of the device is stored and second information required to specify the working status of the device comprises information that allows an access to the storage unit (Figure 6).

24.   As to claim 15, Grewal teaches an online support method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the form is offered to a user without providing a result (col. 3, lines 53-65).

25.   As to claim 24, Grewal teaches an online support method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the device carries out either of processing and generation of digital data, and the specific form asks the user to input at least information that is required to specify a result of either of the processing and the generation carried out by the device (Figure 6).

26.   As to claims 12-14, 16-23, and 30-35, they feature limitations from claims 1-4 and 6 and

are rejected for the same reasons as claims 1-6.

27.   Claims 25-26 and 36-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

U.S. Patent Number 6,691,159 to Grewal et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,477,531 to

Sullivan et al. in further view of U.S. Patent Number 6,119,247 to House et al..

28.   As to claim 25 and 36, the Grewal- Sullivan combination teaches the method of claim 6,

however the Grewal- Sullivan combination does not explicitly teach image data showing the

inputs.

House teaches image data showing the inputs (col. 4, lines 28-44).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the Computer Networking art at the

time of the invention to combine the teachings of the Grewal- Sullivan combination regarding

online help with the teachings of House regarding image data because displaying the image helps

a remote user debug a problem (House, col. 4, lines 28-44).

29.   As to claims 26 and 37, the Grewal- Sullivan combination teaches the method of claim 6,

however the Grewal- Sullivan combination does not explicitly teach image data showing the

outputs.

House teaches image data showing the outputs (col. 4, lines 28-44).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the Computer Networking art at the

time of the invention to combine the teachings of the Grewal- Sullivan combination regarding

online help with the teachings of House regarding image data because displaying the image helps

a remote user debug a problem (House, col. 4, lines 28-44).

30.   Claim 38 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent

Number 6,691,159 to Grewal et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,477,531 to Sullivan et al. in

further view of U.S. Patent Number 6,629,134 to Hayward et al..

31.   Claims 38 features the same limitations as claim 1 with the addition of a display window

that displays the working a status of a device. As pointed out previously, the Grewal- Sullivan

combination makes obvious the features of claim 1; however the Grewal- Sullivan combination

does not explicitly teach a display window that displays the working status of a device.

Hayward teaches a recording medium in which a program is recorded, wherein said

program functions to drive a device and causes a link to an upper-layered online support Web

page (col. 3, lines 54-64), which does not depend upon a model of the device nor a problem, out

of support Web pages that provide a client with support information to eliminate a problem

arising in the device, to be shown in at least one of a setting window that allows a user of the

device to specify settings of the device and a display window that displays a working status of

the device (col. 5, line 58-col. 6, line 57).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the Computer Networking art at the

time of the invention to combine the teachings of the Grewal- Sullivan combination regarding

online support with the teachings of Harward regarding the display of a working status because a

display provides better support than text alone.

32.   Claims 25-26 and 36-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

U.S. Patent Number 6,477,531 to Sullivan et al. in further view of U.S. Patent Number 6,119,247

to House et al..

33.   As to claim 25 and 36, Sullivan teaches the method of claim 24, however Sullivan does

not explicitly teach image data showing the inputs.

House teaches image data showing the inputs (col. 4, lines 28-44).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the Computer Networking art at the

time of the invention to combine the teachings of Sullivan regarding online help with the

teachings of House regarding image data because displaying the image helps a remote user

debug a problem (House, col. 4, lines 28-44).

34.   As to claims 26 and 37, Sullivan teaches the method of claim 24, however Sullivan does

not explicitly teach image data showing the outputs.

House teaches image data showing the outputs (col. 4, lines 28-44).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the Computer Networking art at the

time of the invention to combine the teachings of Sullivan regarding online help with the

teachings of House regarding image data because displaying the image helps a remote user

debug a problem (House, col. 4, lines 28-44).

35.   Claim 38 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent

Number 6,477,531 to Sullivan et al. in further view of U.S. Patent Number 6,629,134 to

Hayward et al..

36.   Claims 38 features the same limitations as claim 1 with the addition of a display window

that displays the working a status of a device. As pointed out previously, Sullivan teaches the

features of claim 1; however Sullivan does not explicitly teach a display window that displays

the working status of a device.

Hayward teaches a recording medium in which a program is recorded, wherein said program functions to drive a device and causes a link to an upper-layered online support Web page (col. 3, lines 54-64), which does not depend upon a model of the device nor a problem, out of support Web pages that provide a client with support information to eliminate a problem arising in the device, to be shown in at least one of a setting window that allows a user of the device to specify settings of the device and a display window that displays a working status of the device (col. 5, line 58-col. 6, line 57).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the Computer Networking art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of Sullivan regarding online support with the teachings of Harward regarding the display of a working status because a display provides better support than text alone.

Response to Arguments

37.   Applicant's arguments filed 1/22/2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The applicant has argued with respect to Sullivan that: (a) Sullivan does not teach providing he user of the device with support information prior to providing a user of the device with specific form that enables the user to input and transmit information with regard to the problem; and (b) Sullivan fails to teach transmitting the information input into the specific form and the browsing record information attached to the specific form to an online support operator.

38.   As to point (a), The rejection based on Sullivan has been revised to consider this argument and is therefore addressed above.

39.   As to point (b), the applicant's specification does not provide any specific information on how the browsing record information is "attached" to specific form therefore the term "attached" can only be interpreted broadly. Since the administrator in Sullivan can see both the browsing record and form input together and this information has been transmitted to the administrator, the fact that the browsing record information corresponds to the form input is considered a form of "attachment".

40.   The applicant's arguments with respect to the motivation to combine Grewal, Meyer, and Rangan are moot because this rejection is no longer applied. Grewal has now been combined with Sullivan.

Conclusion

41.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Douglas B. Blair whose telephone number is (571) 272-3893. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00am-5:30pm.
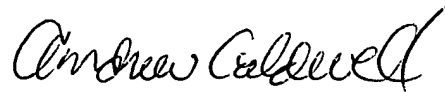
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew Caldwell can be reached on (571) 272-3868. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent

Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications

may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished

applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR

system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR

system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Douglas Blair

ANDREW CALDWELL
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER